

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

3-3-2017

Research Opportunities Prepared GWU Alumna for Job in Microbiology

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Research Opportunities Prepared GWU Alumna for Job in Microbiology

 webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/research-opportunities-prepared-gwu-alumna-for-job-in-microbiology/

Office of University
Communications

March 3, 2017

Keely Ford '14 Works for Medical Equipment Supplier

“Ever since I can remember, science has been my calling,” asserted Keely Ford '14 of Morganton, N.C., who came to Gardner-Webb University to develop her skills in scientific research. “I primarily focused on wild life biology and ecology,” she added. “The ocean was my second home. From around 10 years old, I have been studying and learning more and more about marine life.”

photo of Keely Ford

Her first semester at GWU, the professors in the Department of Natural Sciences recognized her aptitude in microbiology. They asked her to become the microbiology teaching assistant and she kept the position until she graduated. Under the mentorship of Dr. David Judge, professor of biology, she conducted her independent research project on the ostracod (small crustaceans) in GWU's Lake Hollifield. The process gave her experience writing a proposal for a grant, presenting at a scientific conference and using the high-tech equipment. “I latched on to my science professors and quickly tried to earn and gain their respect,” Ford shared. “I went through some very hard times in college and my professors were there to work with me and ensure my success. I am forever grateful for their support and guidance.”

Not only did she receive help from her professors to reach her career goals, Ford was encouraged by the GWU community in her junior year when her brother died. “When I came back, my room was full of letters, notes, signs, and pictures from my closest friends and perfect strangers that came together to make sure I was okay,” she explained. “I did not know some of them, and the people who sent me letters would come up to me and ask to pray. I was grateful for the support and love that the Gardner-Webb family gave to me.”

As she neared graduation, Dr. Stefka Eddins, GWU Professor of Chemistry, suggested that she apply for an undergraduate research experience at the Wrigley Institute on Catalina Island in California. She was accepted and spent the summer after her graduation researching the Pacific oyster. “The experience helped me get more familiar with the scientific community and how it operates,” Ford reflected.

When the summer was over, she was hired to work in the microbiology department at Baxter, a company in Marion, N.C., that manufactures medical products. “I believe having the microbiology experience that I did allowed me to stand out better on my resume,” she

asserted. “I hope to stay at Baxter and pursue more scientific endeavors.”